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# Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**Thirty-second session**

**Summary record of the 683rd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 28 January 2005, at 4 p.m.

*Chairperson*: Ms. Manalo

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*The meeting was called to order at 4.20 p.m.*

**Adoption of the report of the Committee on its thirty-second session** (CEDAW/C/2005/I/L.1, CEDAW/C/2005/I/CRP.3 and Add.1-8)

1. **Ms. Šimonović**, Rapporteur, drew attention to document CEDAW/C/2005/I/L.1, containing sections of the Committee's draft report, and introduced CEDAW/C/2005/I/CRP.3 and Add.1-8, containing its concluding comments on the reports of the eight States parties which it had considered during the session.

2. **The Chairperson** said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the sections of the report contained in CEDAW/C/2005/I/L.1 and documents CEDAW/C/2005/I/CRP.3 and Add.1-8, as amended.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **Ms. Šimonović**, Rapporteur, introduced the draft report of the Working Group of the Whole contained in document CEDAW/C/2005/I/CRP.3/Add.9. It contained the Committee's decision on the review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action and on suggestions for the relief and rehabilitation efforts for the areas affected by the tsunami, and detailed the Committee's actions under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, on the implementation of article 21 of the Convention and on ways and means of expediting its work.

5. **The Chairperson** said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the sections of the report contained in document CEDAW/C/2005/I/CRP.3/Add.9, as amended.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. *The draft report of the Committee as a whole, as amended, was adopted.*

**Statement by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women**

8. **Ms. Mayanja** (Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) observed that the Committee, in considering eight reports of States parties, had dealt with difficult issues and accomplished a significant amount of work. The Committee was also to be congratulated for adopting its contribution to the comprehensive review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action, to be conducted in March 2005 by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session. In the 10 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women the Committee had consistently reminded States parties that implementation of the Platform for Action was a contribution to the implementation of the Convention. During that period, remarkable progress had been achieved in the implementation of the strategic objectives of the Convention and the Platform for Action. Moreover, the reports of States parties had shown that greater harmonization had been achieved between international norms and standards, on the one hand, and national legislation, on the other.

9. However, she urged the Committee to pay closer attention to long-standing and emerging challenges, such as the adverse effects of the transition to market economies, economic recession, economic restructuring, the impact of structural adjustment and globalization, all of which had resulted in deep poverty among women and had prohibited their full development and advancement, as well as their enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. With regard to political rights, women's participation in policymaking and decision-making continued to lag behind in all countries, even the most developed. Trafficking in women was of particular concern to the international community. Violence against women at home and in the workplace continued unabated. The response of legal officials to that problem was weak in many countries, and prevention strategies remained fragmented and reactive. Women also suffered disproportionately from the effects of escalating civil and ethnic conflicts.

10. The forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women would offer an opportunity to achieve closer links between the work of the Committee, the Commission, and the Economic and Social Council. The tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women should be an occasion for a clear reaffirmation of the goals and commitments of the Platform for Action. Although much had been achieved, there should be a renewed commitment to the implementation of the commitments made at both the national and international levels. She wished to reiterate her commitment, as well as that of the Director and staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women, to help the Committee in its efforts to achieve universal ratification of the Convention and to encourage more timely reporting by States parties.

**Statement by the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women**

11. **Ms. Hannan** (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) said that the concluding comments adopted by the Committee concerning the eight States parties reporting during the thirty-second session would make a significant contribution to the ongoing process of achieving equality for all women at the national level. The high level of attendance by non-governmental organizations and other observers at the session had indicated the importance attached to the Convention and to the work of the Committee. The Division for the Advancement of Women would do its best to facilitate the Committee's work by helping States parties to meet their reporting obligations and, through its technical assistance programme, to implement the Convention at the national level.

12. The forthcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women would provide an excellent opportunity to engage all levels of Government, as well as civil society and different parts of the United Nations system, in a systematic discussion about the Convention and its links with the Platform for Action, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. The Platform for Action accorded a particular place to the human rights of women and to the Convention, and called on the Committee to take the Platform for Action into account in its constructive dialogue with States parties. It was thus very important that the Committee was represented and visible at the session.

**Statement by the Chairperson**

13. **The Chairperson** said that during its constructive dialogue with the eight reporting States parties, the Committee had identified a number of common elements that must be tackled if States were to make progress in ensuring women's enjoyment of their human rights and enhance Governments' compliance with their treaty obligations. Three elements were worthy of mention: the Committee had been unable to state that women's de jure equality had been achieved in any of the eight States parties, stereotypes continued to be a challenge to gender equality in all countries reviewed and women's access to justice was an area of significant concern.

14. There were also many areas in which the Committee had noted insufficient progress in eliminating discrimination against women and achieving practical realization of the principle of equality of women and men. In two of those areas, employment and participation in decision-making, women's de facto equality with men was far from being achieved. Regarding those and other areas covered by the Convention, the Committee had called on States parties to take specific measures to speed up the realization of equality, and had provided detailed guidance in a number of areas. In particular, it had requested States parties to undertake a careful assessment of the impact of the measures taken in order to ensure that such measures produced the desired results.

15. The Committee had also continued its work under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, adopted a statement as a contribution to the 10-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and adopted a statement on the gender aspects of the tsunami disaster in South-east Asia. It had been disappointed by the General Assembly's lack of action regarding its request for authorization of additional meeting time, and would take up the matter again at its thirty-third session.

16. Important progress had been made with respect to the Committee's working methods. Steps had been taken to enhance further its constructive dialogue with States parties, ensure that its concluding comments were more focused and review its work programme for the preparation of general recommendations. Lastly, the Committee would contribute its preliminary views on the proposals for harmonized reporting guidelines to the next session of the inter-committee meeting, as part of the reform process of the human rights treaty bodies.

**Provisional agenda for the thirty-third session**

17. *The provisional agenda for the thirty-third session, as amended, was adopted.*

**Closure of the session**

18. *The Chairperson declared the thirty-second session closed.*

*The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.*